

THE CHILD OF LIGHT AND THE WORKS OF DARKNESS

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A SERMON
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“Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”
Ephesians 5:11

SINS, especially the grosser vices, are “works of darkness.” They delight in concealment, they are not fit to be seen, they flourish in the darkness of the unrenewed heart, they are most fully maintained in the ignorance of a soul that is without the knowledge of the ever-blessed God. They are also works of darkness, because those who follow them have a sad life of it, after all—they are not only dark as to knowledge, but they are dark as to comfort as well. There is no true light, no real joy, in sin. “The wages of sin is death.”

And they are works of darkness, too, because they tend to further darkness—the man who pursues them goes from blackness to a deeper blackness, and in the end his portion will be darkness unbroken by a ray of hope, “the blackness of darkness for ever.”

You know that darkness stands for the powers of evil, as light is the fit emblem of the holiness of God, and of His infinite goodness and purifying grace. Well, now whether we, who are the children of light are busy or not, it is quite certain that children of darkness work. They are always working—there is no cessation in their activity.

Master Latimer used to say that the most diligent bishop in England was the devil, for whoever did not visit his diocese the devil was always visiting his people. His plough never rusts in the furrow, his sword never rests in its scabbard. The powers of darkness cannot be blamed for their slothfulness—is there ever a moment in which they are not busy and active?

Luke warmth never steals over the powers of darkness. The work of the night goes on horribly, there is no pause to it. Therefore, let us who are of the day work, too. God help us to counteract the working of the silent, hidden leaven of sin by our own struggling to produce in the world a better tone of thought and feeling, and by spreading the knowledge of God's grace and everything which will increase reverence to God and love to men!

The text speaks of the works of darkness and it calls them “unfruitful.” So they are, for sin is sterile. It produces its like and multiplies itself, but as for any fruit that is good, any fruit that can elevate and benefit men, any fruit which God can accept, and which you and I ought to desire, sin is barren as the desert sand. Nothing good can come of it.

Every now and then we hear it said, “Well, you know, on this occasion, we must set aside the higher laws of equity, because just now it is imperatively necessary that such and such a policy should be pursued.” But it is never right either for an individual or for a nation to do wrong—and the most fruitful policy for men and for nations is to do that which will bear the light.

The works of the light are fruitful works, rich and sweet, and fit to be gathered, pleasant to God and profitable to men. But the works of darkness are fruitless, they come to nothing, they produce no good result. They are like the apples of Sodom, which may appear fair to the eyes, but he that plucks them shall find that he has nothing but ashes in his hand. O you who are performing works of darkness, know that no good fruit will come of all your work! You can have nothing that is worth having as the result of all your toil.

My text, which I have just introduced to you by these few remarks, demands our attention as a great practical lesson to Christians, “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” Those works of darkness which are horrible and unmentionable, you cannot have fellowship with them. They produce an evil very potent to all mankind. Of course, you will avoid them, pass not by them, and flee from them.

But you must also keep clear of those works of darkness which apparently seem to be colorless and to produce no particularly evil effect. You, as a Christian man, have to live a solemn, earnest, serious life. To you—

“Life is real, life is earnest,”

and if there are works of darkness which do not seem to be as bad as others, but are simply frivolous, foolish, and time-wasting, have no fellowship with them. These unfruitful works of darkness are to be avoided by you as much as those which are most defiling. Hear this, you Christian men, and God help you to obey the command!

In coming to the consideration of our text, let us inquire, first, *What is forbidden?* Fellowship with “the unfruitful works of darkness.” Secondly, let us ask, *What is commanded?* “Reprove them.” And thirdly, let us consider, *Why are we thus to act?*

I. First, then, WHAT IS FORBIDDEN?

“Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.” We can have fellowship with them in a great number of ways.

Notice that the text does not say, “Have no fellowship with wicked men. Have no dealings with men who are not converted,” for then we must needs go out of the world. Many of us are obliged to earn our daily bread in the midst of men whom we certainly would not choose for our companions. Many of you, I know, are forced every day to hear language which is disgusting to you and you are brought into contact with modes of procedure which sadden your gracious spirits.

Our Savior does not pray that you should be taken out of the world, but that you should be preserved from the evil of it. If you are what you profess to be, you are the salt of the earth, and salt is not meant to be kept in a box, but to be well-rubbed into the meat to keep it from putrefaction. We are not to shut ourselves up as select companies of men seeking only our own edification and enjoyment, but it is intended that we should mingle with the ungodly so far as our duties demand.

We are forced to do so—it is the Lord’s intent that we should, so that we may act as salt among them. God grant that the salt may never lose its savor and that the unsavory world may never destroy the pungency of the piety of God’s people! With evil men, then, we must have some kind of fellowship, but with their works we are to have no fellowship. In order to avoid this evil, let us see what is here forbidden—“Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.”

And first, dear friends, we have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness *by personally committing the sins so described*. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked.” After all, a man must be judged by his life. If you do that which is holy and righteous and gracious, you have fellowship with the holy and the righteous and the gracious. But if you do that which is unclean and dishonest, you have fellowship with the unclean and the dishonest.

The Lord will, at the last, put us among those whom we are most like—in that day when He shall separate the people gathered before Him as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats—the sheep will be put with the sheep and the goats with the goats. If you have lived like the wicked, you will die like the wicked and be damned like the wicked. It is only those who live the life of the righteous who can hope that they shall die the death of the righteous.

I, who preach to you with all my heart the doctrine of the grace of God, do, nevertheless, just as boldly remind you that the grace of God brings forth fruit in the life, and where it is really in the heart, there will be in the life that which betokens its presence. If you and I are drunkards, if we can do a

dishonest action, if we are guilty of falsehood, if we are covetous (I need not go over the list of all those evil things), then we belong to the class of men who delight in such practices—and with them we must go forever. We are having fellowship with them by doing as they do and we shall have an awful fellowship with them at the last by suffering as they shall suffer. God make us holy, then!

The very name of Jesus signifies that He will save His people *from* their sins and He saves them from their sins by their ceasing to commit those sins that others do. His own word is, “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” “Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the LORD.” Nothing more dishonors Him than to have a following of unclean men—men who refuse to be washed and resolve not to quit their old sins.

Great sinners, ay—the biggest sinners out of hell—are welcome to come to Christ in order to be cleansed from their sin and set free from it. He keeps a hospital wherein He receives the most sick of all the sick, but it is that He may heal them. And if men do not wish to be healed, but count the marks of their disease to be beauty-spots—if they love their sins and hug them to their bosoms—then thus says the Lord to them, “Ye shall die in your sins.” God save all His professing people from this form of fellowship with the works of darkness!

Next, we can have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness *by teaching wrongdoing, either by plain words or by just inference*. Any man whose teaching tends towards unholiness, who directly or indirectly, either by overt phrase or by natural inference, leads another man into sin, is *particeps criminis*, a partaker of the crime.

If you teach your children what they ought never to learn, if you teach your fellow workmen what they had better never know, and if they improve upon your lessons, and go much farther than you ever meant that they should—if they proceed from folly to crime—you are a partaker of their sins and you have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.

And believe me, there is nothing more awful than for any minister of Christ to have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness by keeping back any part of the truth—by withholding any of the precepts of God’s Word, or by denying the terrible and eternal consequences of sin. There is nothing more dreadful than the end of such a man must be. I think that I would sooner die and be judged of God as a murderer of men’s bodies, than have to go before the judgment seat charged with being the murderer of their souls through having kept back helpful truth, or insinuated destructive and erroneous doctrines. Yes, we can easily have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness in that way.

Further, there are some who will have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness by *constraining, commanding, or tempting others to sin*. How much harm is often done in this respect by want of thought! What you do by another, you do yourself. If you command another to do for you what you know to be wrong—I will not say that the other is right in the compliance—but I will say that you are wrong in having given the command. Let fathers, let masters, let mistresses, see to it that they never command others to do what God has not commanded them to do.

Sometimes it is not actually a command that you give, but you put the person into such a position of temptation and trial that the probabilities are that that person will do wrong—and if it be so—in the sight of God you will have to share the guilt of that wrong. When a master pays his servant less wages than he ought to have—if that servant commits a theft, I condemn the theft, but I cannot clear the master who put the man into a position in which he must have been sorely tempted to take something more to make up for that of which he had been defrauded.

I do not excuse the theft by him who committed it, but still I cannot screen the one who put the other where, in all probability, he would be driven to commit a dishonest act. If I place a man in a position where it is most probable, seeing that human nature is what it is, that he will commit a sin, if I have wantonly put him there, or put him there for my own profit and gain, I shall be a partaker of the sin if he falls.

If you are a nurse girl, and you take those little children and set them on the edge of the cliff, letting them go to the very brink of it—and they fall over, you cannot clear yourself of blame in the matter. It may be that you told the children not to go too close to the edge, but then you put them where you might

be morally certain that, as children, they would go—and you are responsible for all that happens to them.

So, if I set another in a place where I might be able to stand myself, but might be pretty sure that he could not, I shall be a partaker of his sin. “Well, I drink my glass of wine,” says one. Yes, and apparently it does you no harm whatever—you have never been excited by it and you feel grateful for it—but there is another man who could not do as you have done without becoming a drunkard, and by your example he is made a drunkard and helped to remain so. The practice may be safe enough for you, but if it is ruinous to him, take heed lest you be a partaker of his unfruitful works of darkness.

It will require great care, and some self-denial, so to act towards others that we can say when we go to bed at night, “If any man has done a wrong thing today, it is not because I have set him the example.” Oh, that we might all repent of other people’s sins!

Did you ever repent of them? “I have had enough to do to repent of my own sins,” says one. But these sins of which I am speaking are your own, as well as other people’s, if you have led others into the way of committing the sin, or have put any pressure upon them to lead them to commit sin, you are having fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.

Sometimes men get to be partakers of others’ sins *by provoking them*. When fathers provoke their children to anger, who has the chief blame of that sin? Surely the father has. And when, sometimes, persons purposely play upon the infirmities of others to provoke them, are they not more to blame than the offenders? I am sure that it is so.

I have known some try to draw others out when they have known their propensity to go beyond the truth—they have, for mirth’s sake, led them on and tempted them to lie. Who is the greater sinner of the two in such a case as that? I am no casuist, and shall not attempt to weigh actions, but I am able to say this most assuredly, that, if you provoke another to anger, that anger is in part your sin. If you wantonly incite another to sin by daring him to do it, or by any other method of tempting him to do wrong, you yourself shall share the accusation at the last great day.

Further, friends, we can be partakers of the unfruitful works of darkness *by counseling them*. There are some men who will not do the wrong things themselves, but they will give evil advice to others and so lead them into iniquity. We have known persons act the part of the cat with the monkey—they have used some other hand to draw the chestnuts from the fire. They were not themselves burned, but then they really did the deed by their agents. Theirs was the advice, theirs the wit, theirs the shrewd hard-headedness by which the evil was done. And though they did not appear in the transaction, yet God saw them and He will reckon with them in the day of account.

I feel very jealous of myself when I have to give advice—and that experience often falls to my lot. A person will plead, “Well, if I do right in such a case as this, I shall remain in poverty, or I shall lose my situation. If I follow out my conscientious convictions to the full, who is to provide for me?” And you know, the temptation is to feel, “Well now really, we must not be too severe in our judgment upon this poor soul. Can we not agree with the evident wish of the person asking the advice, moderate the law of God, or in some way make a loophole, and say, ‘Well, it will not be right, but still, you see, *under the circumstances* ____.’”

Now, I never dare do that, because, if wrong be done, and I have counseled it, I shall be a partaker in the wrong. You who are called to give advice to others—as many of you may be by reason of your age and experience—always give straight advice. Never let any man learn *policy* from you. Of all things in this world, that which often commends itself to certain “prudent” men, but which, nevertheless, never ought to commend itself to Christian men, is the idea of doing a little evil in order to obtain a great good.

In fact, believing ourselves to be wiser than the commands of God, and imagining that strict truth, and probity, and integrity would, after all, not be the best thing for men, even though God has so ordained. Do let us so guide others that we shall have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.

But we may have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness *by consenting to them and conniving at them*. For instance, you live in a house where there is a great deal of evil going on, and you yourself stay clear of it. So far so good. But you never protest against it—you have been altogether silent about it. “Mum,” has been the word with you and sometimes, when they come home from a place of ill resort and they tell you about the “fun” they have had, you laugh with the rest, or if you do not laugh, at any rate, you have not decidedly expressed your disapproval.

You do disapprove of the evil—in secret, you even pray against it, but nobody knows that it is so, the wrongdoers especially are not aware that it is so. In fact, they fancy that, as they treat leniently your pursuit of religion, though they think it cant, so you treat leniently their pursuit of sin—though in your heart of hearts you believe that pursuit to be evil.

Our Lord commands us to clear ourselves of all conniving at sin—not with harshness, not with denunciation, and in an unkind spirit—but with a mild, gentle, but still powerful, honest rebuke. We must say, especially if we are parents, or masters, or persons having much influence with others, “Oh, do not this abominable thing! I cannot have any share in this evil, even by silently tolerating it. How I wish that you would give it up! I entreat you, come out of this Sodom—escape for your lives!”

A few more loving home testimonies for God and who can tell but that the husband may be converted and the son may be led to the Savior? But for want of this personal witness-bearing among Christians, I am afraid that the church of God comes to be paralyzed, and much of her power and usefulness is taken from her. Do not let us connive or wink at sin in any case whatever.

Far be it from us also to ever have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness *by commending or applauding sin, or seeming to agree with it*. We must let all men know that whatever they may do which has about it an ill savor, it has an ill savor to us and we cannot endure it, but must ever protest against it, lest we be partakers of the sins of others.

O dear friends, I believe that the great lack of the church just now is holiness! The great need of the church is nonconformity. I mean nonconformity to the world. We must endeavor to bring back the strictness of the Puritan times and somewhat more. Everybody is so liberal and takes such latitude, nowadays, that in some quarters it is impossible to tell which is the church and which is the world. I have even heard some ministers propose that there should be no church distinct from the congregation, but that everybody would be a church-member, without the slightest examination, or even a profession of conversion.

It is supposed that people are now so generally good that we may take them indiscriminately and that they will make a church quite good enough for the Lord Jesus Christ! Ah, me, that is not according to Christ’s mind, and that is not Christ’s teaching. God’s call to this age, as to all that went before, is, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

Bear your protest, my brethren and my sisters, against everything that is unrighteous and unholy—everything that is not Godlike and Christlike—and let your lives be such that men shall not need to ask to whom you belong, whether to God or to the devil, but they shall see at once that you are the people of the ever-living and blessed God.

This, then, is what is forbidden—“Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.”

II. The time flies so fast that I can only very briefly answer the second question, WHAT IS COMMANDED? “Reprove them.”

Our life’s business in the world comprehends this among our other Christian duties—the reproofing of the unfruitful works of darkness.

First, *we are to rebuke sin*. I find that the word which is here rendered “reprove” is that which is used concerning the Holy Spirit—“When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.” We are, therefore, so to live as to let the light in upon men’s consciences, that we may rebuke them for their sin.

But we are also to try to let the sinners themselves see the sinfulness of their sin, to let the light in upon the sin, and by God's grace, so to reprove them as *to convict them of sin*—to make them feel, from the testimony of God's people, that sin is an evil and a bitter thing—and that their course of conduct is that evil thing.

The light of God has come into the world on purpose that the darkness may know that it is darkness, and that God's light may overcome and disperse it. We are not to quench our light and mingle with others who are in the dark, but to unveil our lamps and let the light that is in them so shine that the darkness shall thereby be reproved. I do not say, brothers and sisters, that we are to go through the world wearing surly faces, looking grim as death, perpetually promulgating the law, and saying, "Thou shalt not do this and thou shalt not do that."

But cheerful as we must be with the love of God in our hearts, we shall prove to men that the freest and the happiest life is a life of holiness, a life of consecration to God, and that, together with the faithful testimony of our lips, shall be a reproof of the sin that is in the world. The very existence of a true believer is the reproof of unbelief. The existence of an honest man is the reproof of knavery. The existence of a godly man is the best reproof of ungodliness. But when that existence is backed up by verbal testimony and by a consistent example, then the command in the text is fulfilled, for we are reproofing the unfruitful works of darkness.

III. Thirdly, let us ask, WHY ARE WE TO ACT THUS?

Why are we sent into the world, dear friends, to reprove sin and not to follow in its track? The reasons are given in this very chapter.

First, *because we are God's dear children and therefore we must be imitators of Him*. You, a child of God, and having fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness? You, a child of God, imitating the lost and fallen world? You, a child of God, submitting to the influences of the devil and his filthy crew? Far be it from you. Ask your Father to make you holy as He is holy. To that end were you born and sent into the world—entreat your Father to help you to fulfill the very purpose of your being.

Next, remember that *we who are believers have an inheritance in the kingdom of God*. We are heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. Well, then, shall we have fellowship with those who have no inheritance in this kingdom? Remember what we read just now—"For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

And will you, who have a part in this inheritance, make common lot with such people? Oh, be it far from you! Heir of glory, will you be a companion of the heirs of wrath? Joint-heir with Christ, will you sit on the drunkard's bench or trill an unclean song with the profane? Are their places of amusement fit for you to frequent? Are their dens of iniquity haunts for you? Up and away from the dwellings of these wicked men, lest you are destroyed in their destruction!

A little further down in the chapter, in the seventh and eighth verses, we read—"Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For *ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord*." What! Has a marvelous conversion happened to you? Have you been turned from darkness to light? Are you really new creatures in Christ Jesus or is it all a lie?

For if indeed you have been twice-born, if you have had a resurrection from among the dead, if a second creation has been wrought in you, how can you go and live with these dead men and mingle with these who know not the life of God? Unless your profession is nothing but a farce or a fraud, grace will so constrain you that you must come out and refuse to have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.

The text describes these works as being unfruitful and you read in the ninth verse, "*The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth*." Now, if you are to bear the fruits of the Spirit, what fellowship can you have with the unfruitful works of darkness? The two things are opposed to one another. You fruit-bearing trees, are you going to join in affinity with these cumber-grounds that soon must be cut down and cast into the fire?

What! Will you interlace your vine branches with these fig trees that have leaves upon them, but no fruit, and upon which no fruit will ever grow, for they are under the curse of God? No, it must not be so. People of God, serve Him and come away from those who render Him no service, but who rather seek to pull down His holy temple, and to destroy His name and influence from among the sons of men!

The apostle gives us one more reason why we should have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness—*“for it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.”* What! Shall we have fellowship with things of which we are ashamed even to speak? Yet I have to say it and to say it to my own sorrow and horror—I have known professors to have fellowship with things that I dare not even think of now. They have been found out at length—some of them were never found out till after they were dead.

What a life to lead—to sit with God’s people at the communion table, to talk even to others about the way of salvation, yet all the while living in the practice of secret sin! Why, surely, it were better to get into prison at once than to be always afraid of being apprehended. To go up and down the world making a profession of religion, and yet to be acting a lie all the while, and living in constant fear of being found out!

Whatever sin we may fall into, God save us from hypocrisy, and make us honest and straightforward in all things! Shall we, then, go and have fellowship with things of which we should be ashamed even to speak? God forbid!

I am afraid that I am speaking many truths that you will regard as having nothing in them that is comfortable to you, but brothers and sisters, can I help it? Can it be avoided? If we are to make full proof of our ministry and preach all the truth to you, must we not take every passage of God’s Word, whether it is of rebuke or of comfort, in its due season?

To myself the effect of thinking over this subject is this—I have cried, “Lord, have mercy upon me.” I have fled again to the cross of Christ. I have sought anew for an anointing of the Holy Spirit that I might not in anything have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. And if my discourse has that effect upon you, it will do you great service.

Oh, ask the Lord to make our outward lives more thoroughly pure and true! Give me a little church of really gracious, devoted, upright, godly men, and I will be glad to minister to them, and I shall expect God to bless them.

But give me a large church consisting of thousands—if there are in it many whose lives, if they were known, would disgust a man of God, and whose lives, being known to the Spirit of God, are a grief to Him, why, then the blessing must be withheld! We may preach our hearts out and wear ourselves to death in all kinds of holy service, but with an Achan in the camp, Israel cannot win the victory.

I beseech you, therefore, search and look. One pair of eyes, two pairs of eyes, in the pastorate, and the eyes of the elders and deacons of the church, can never suffice to watch over such a company as this is. The Lord watch over you, and may you have a mutual oversight of one another. And above all, may each one exercise daily watchfulness over his own heart and life. Thus, beloved brethren and sisters in Christ, I leave the text with you, praying God to bless it—*“Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”*

Now, if any here are living in fellowship with those unfruitful works of darkness, I pray them to escape for their lives from them. May they fly to Christ, who alone can save them, and when they have once found healing through His wounds and life through His death, then let them pray to be kept from all sin that they may lead a holy and gracious life to the glory of Him who has washed them in His own most precious blood. The Lord send a blessing, for His dear Son’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

EPHESIANS 5

Verse 1. *Be ye therefore followers of God,*

Or, imitators of God,—

1. *As dear children;*

Children are naturally imitators. They are usually inclined to imitate their father. This is, therefore, a most comely and appropriate precept, “Be ye therefore imitators of God, as dear children.”

2. *And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor.*

What a path to walk in! “Walk in love.” What a well-paved way it is! “As Christ also hath loved us.” What a blessed person for us to follow in that divinely royal road! It would have been hard for us to tread this way of love, if it had not been that His blessed feet marked out the track for us. We are to love as Christ also hath loved us, and the question which will often solve difficulties is this, “What would Jesus Christ do in my case? What he would have done, that we may do, “Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us.”

And if we want to know how far that love may be carried, we need not be afraid of going too far in self-denial. We may even make a sacrifice of ourselves for love of God and men, for here is our model, “As Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.”

3. *But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;*

So far from ever falling under the power of these evils, do not even name them—count them sins unmentionable to holy ears. In what a position do we find “covetousness” placed, side by side with “fornication and all uncleanness”! In the epistle to the Colossians, covetousness is called “idolatry,” as if the Holy Spirit thought so ill of this sin that He could never put it in worse company than it deserved to be in. Yet I fear it is a very common sin even amongst some who call themselves saints. God deliver us altogether from its sway and help us to hate the very name of it!

4. *Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient but rather giving of thanks.*

All sorts of evil, frivolous, fruitless talk should be condemned by the Christian. He should feel that he lives at a nobler rate, he lives to purpose. He lives to bear fruit, and that which has no fruit about it and out of which no good can come, is not for him. “But rather giving of thanks.” Oh, for more of this giving of thanks! It should perfume the labours of the day, it should sweeten the rest of the night, this giving of thanks. We are always receiving blessings. Let us never cease to give God thanks for them. If we never leave off thanking until we are beyond the need of blessing, we shall go on praising the Lord as long as we live here and continue to do so throughout eternity.

5. *For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath, any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

What a sweeping sentence! This is indeed a sword with two edges. Many will flinch before it, and yet, though they flinch, they will not escape, for Paul speaks neither more nor less than the truth when he declares that “no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.”

6. *Let no man deceive you with vain words for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.*

These are the very things God hates. If, therefore, they are in you, God cannot look upon you with the love that He feels towards His children. “These things” He cannot endure, and “because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.”

8. *Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness,*

Then, “these things” suited you.

8. *But now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light;*

Get clean away from these dark things. Travel no more in the thick gloom of these abominations. God help you to walk in the light as He is in the light!

9-10. *(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.*

We ought to pray that our whole life may be “acceptable unto the Lord.” We are ourselves “accepted in the beloved,” and that being the case, it should be our great desire that every thought and word and deed, ay, every breathing of our life, should be “acceptable unto the Lord.”

11-12. *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.*

It was so with the old heathen world in which Paul lived. He could not write or speak of those abominable vices, which defiled the age. But is London any better than Ephesus? Surely, old Corinth, which became a sink of sin, was not a worse Sodom than this great modern Babylon. There is great cause to say of the wicked even to this day, “It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.”

13. *But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light;*

Then drag them to the light! There will be a great howling when these dogs of darkness have the light let in upon them, but it has to be done.

13-15. *For whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.*

See then that ye walk circumspectly. Not carelessly, not thinking that it is of no importance how you live, but looking all round you, “walk circumspectly,” watching lest even in seeking one good thing you spoil another. Never present to God one duty stained with the blood of another duty. “See then that ye walk circumspectly,”

15-16. *Not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time,*

Buying up the hours. They are of such value that you cannot pay too high a price for them.

16-18. *Because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*

If you want excitement, seek this highest, holiest, happiest form of exhilaration, the divine exhilaration which the Holy Spirit alone can give you, “Be filled with the Spirit.”

19. *Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;*

We should have thought that Paul would have said, “Singing and making melody with your voice to the Lord,” but the apostle, guided by the Holy Ghost, overlooks the sound, which is the mere body of the praise, and looks to the heart, which is the living soul of the praise, “Making melody in your heart to the Lord,” for the Lord cares not merely for sounds, though they be the sweetest that ever came from the lip of man or angel. He looks at the heart. God is a Spirit, and He looks spiritually at our spiritual praises, therefore, let us make melody in our heart to the Lord.

20-21. *Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*

That principle of maintaining your rights, standing up for your dignity, and so on, is not according to the mind of the Spirit. It is His will that you should rather yield your rights, and for the sake of peace, and the profit of your brethren, give up what you might naturally claim as properly belonging to you, “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”

22-30. *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church and he is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands, in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought*

men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones,

What a wonderful expression! To think that we, poor creatures that we are, should be thus joined to Christ by a marriage union, nay, by a vital union, is indeed amazing. Oh, the depths of the love of Christ, that such an expression as this should be possible!

31-32. *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

There is the mystery, that He should leave His Father, and quit the home above, and become one flesh with His elect, going with them, and for their sakes, through poverty, and pain, and shame, and death. This is a marvel and a mystery indeed.

33. *Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself, and the wife see that she reverence her husband.*

Thus the Spirit of God follows us to our homes and teaches us how to live to the glory of God. May He help us so to do, for Christ's sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—423, 649, 656

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.